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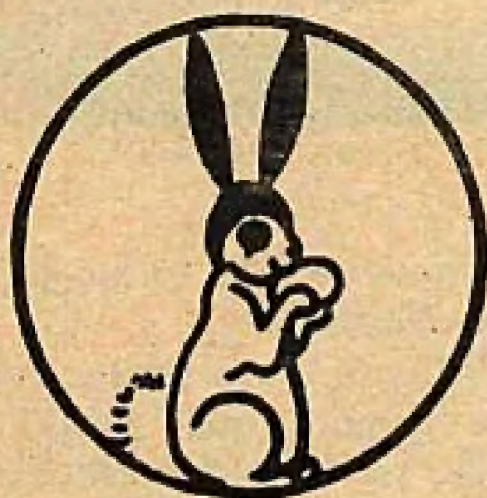
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in this
issue

	Page
Honest Work	8
The Robber King	10
Adventure of Gavriolo	14
Buried Treasure	19
Big Hans	24
Gulliver's Travels	29
Card Index of Knowledge	33
Baron Munchausen	37
The Three Sisters	41
The Two Princes	46
Mahabharata	53
Photo Contest	59
Legend of Odin	60

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HONEST WORK

Prophet Mohammed was walking one day through the streets of Mecca, when a beggar sitting by the road side, clutched the Prophet's robe and begged for alms.

The Prophet stopped to look at the beggar. The beggar was certainly a miserable specimen of manhood. His unkempt hair and beard were as ragged and dirty as the clothes he wore. Over his shoulders he had a torn blanket and his grimy, hands clutched a begging bowl. And there he squatted on the roadside, moaning pathetically to attract the attention of passers by.

The Prophet asked him. 'Are you so incapable of work that

you have to take to begging for a livelihood?'

"Master," the beggar replied in a cringing voice. "All I have in the world is this old blanket and earthenware bowl, and who would employ such as the likes of me?"

The Prophet held out his hand. "If all you possess is that blanket and bowl, give them to me."

The beggar was so surprised at this demand, he handed over the blanket and bowl without a murmur. The Prophet turned to the people who were standing around and asked them to buy the beggar's blanket and bowl. Although these miserable objects were valueless, but because

it was the Prophet who offered them for sale, they fetched a good price.

The beggar eyed the money in the Prophet's hand, and groaned even more pathetically as he whimpered. "Master, how can I live without my blanket and bowl? I shall certainly starve to death, or perish from the cold."

"Get to your feet," the Prophet ordered. "Take this money and by all means buy another blanket and eating plate. But above all, you will purchase a good axe, and earn a living as a wood-cutter. You will find the work hard at first, but remember through hard toil, you will be able to find an honourable way of life."

The beggar hung his head in shame, and would have thanked the Prophet, but the Prophet said, "Go, and do as I bid.

When you have regained your manhood, you may come and thank me."

Several months passed, then one morning the Prophet was confronted by a man, who knelt at his feet saying, "Master, I was the beggar, but am now a wood-cutter. By hard work I have become a man again. So now I have come to offer you my humble thanks."

Then the Prophet recognized that this was the decrepit old beggar. "Rise, my son," he said. You have earned your right to live as other men. It should be borne in mind that when people who are not crippled or stricken with disease, lose courage and turn to beggary for succour, they forfeit their self respect.

Go now, my son, and remember that honest work is a blessing."



THE ROBBER KING

In ancient Vidarbha, there was a time when it seemed that the kingdom was being ruled by dacoits. Everyday there were endless complaints of merchants being waylaid and robbed. Houses were burgled even though the guards had been doubled.

The youthful King, who had only been on the throne a short time, was harassed from all sides. The rich people of the kingdom demanded that the King should provide armed protection for their property and when they went on journeys. His ministers said the only answer was to proclaim that all thieves would be summarily executed.

But as time went on, severe punishment did not seem to deter the thieves, because robberies were certainly on the increase. In the end, the King decided he would find out for himself the reason for such a spate of crime.

Unbeknown to his ministers, the King disguised as a commoner, set out on foot, to tour his

kingdom and see what he could discover.

Coming to a village, and already feeling footsore, he decided to join a group of the men-folk who were sitting outside the temple.

At first the villagers eyed him with suspicion, but very soon the King, who could be very charming, was deep in conversation with some of the elders.

"Tell me," said the King. "I understand there are lots of robbers in this kingdom. Are you good people often robbed?"

"Good gracious no," replied one of the men with a broad smile. "We are far too poor to interest robbers."

"You are certainly a stranger," chortled another. "Here, like all other villages, the land is owned by the rich, who demand high rents. Then on top of that, the king's ministers tax us on everything. So you see, we are too poor to rob."

The King was rather taken back on hearing this. "But why are there so many robberies in the land?"

"The poor have to live," the man answered in growing rage. "These robbers you speak of only rob the rich, who have already robbed the poor. And it is only the so-called robbers who will help the sick and, needy."

"I would rather like to meet one of these robbers," said the King, with a disarming smile.

The men looked at each other in surprise. "Go to the next village," one of them said. "And ask for Bhoja. He might help you."

Bidding adieu to the villagers, the King made his way to the next village, where he promptly sought out this man Bhoja.

When the King found Bhoja, he was surprised to find he was a small nondescript individual, who did not appear to have a care in the world.

"What may you want?" Bhoja said, eyeing the King from top to toe.

"I am looking for someone who would like to employ a nimble hand," the King replied. "Someone who is not afraid to take a risk."

Bhoja looked puzzled at first, then he broke out into a roar of laughter. "Are you trying



to tell me that you are a robber?"

"I have had a lot of experience," replied the King. "And I have never been caught."

"Well, you look a likely sort," Bhoja said, scratching his chin. "Maybe I will try you out."

The King was relieved that Bhoja did not ask too many questions. "Good, whose house do we burgle?"

Bhoja grinned and slapped the King on the back. "Tonight, my friend, you and I will visit the King's treasury."

The King was amazed at the audacity of such a venture, but on second thought, it would be

a good test to find out how alert his guards were. Turning to Bhoja he said. "How do we share the booty?"

Bhoja looked hurt. "We share everything equally," he chortled. "Just remember, if we get caught, we shall both suffer the same punishment, so it is only fair we should also share any gains we make."

The King was surprised at such philosophy, and thought that perhaps robbers were not as bad as they had been painted.

Late that night the King and Bhoja crept up to the palace walls, and Bhoja, with the dexterity of a monkey, climbed the wall and threw down a rope so that the King could follow.

Carefully avoiding the guards, who to the King appeared more asleep than awake, the two made their way to the treasury building. Here Bhoja produced a big bunch of odd looking keys, and in no time, slid back the lock and opened the huge door.

Lighting a torch, Bhoja soon laid his hands on a golden casket, which he forced open. Inside were three diamonds,, each the size of a pigeon's egg.

"Here is the booty," Bhoja exclaimed, rubbing his hands.



"But we cannot divide three diamonds, so as they are worth a king's ransom, we will take one each."

So each pocketed a diamond, and left the treasury and palace just as stealthily as they had entered. Outside the palace walls, the King and Bhoja parted company. The King waited till Bhoja was out of sight, then quietly entered his palace.

The following morning the chief minister was aroused by the captain of the guard, with the news that the treasury had been burgled in the night. The minister hastened to the treasury, and when he discovered the broken casket with one diamond still inside, he quietly slipped the diamond into his pocket when the guards were not looking. Then he hurried to

tell the King the bad news.

"Your Majesty," he shouted, as he rushed into the King's chamber. "Last night thieves entered the treasury and stole your three great diamonds!"

The King did not seem at all perturbed. Telling the minister to wait outside, he ordered the captain of the guard to go to the village and arrest a man named Bhoja.

When Bhoja was dragged before the King, he did not recognize his burglary accomplice, but realising the game was up, tearfully confessed to the robbery, and maintained that he and his aide had only stolen two diamonds.

"This man is an utter rogue," the minister exclaimed. "Obviously he stole all the diamonds and should be put to death."

"Not so fast," the King said. "I have already discovered the

accomplice, who tells the same story as this prisoner."

"Torture will make them sing a different story," the minister urged.

The King stood up and confronted the minister. "No my friend," he said sternly. "I think we shall find the third diamond in your possession. Now it is your turn to confess."

The minister was so taken back, all he could do was blubber out some incoherent story, which the King dismissed with a shrug, and ordered the minister to be cast into a dungeon for the remainder of his life.

Bhoja was pardoned and given service in the King's household. The King changed many of his ministers, and many of the laws, so that taxes and rents were lowered, and the people no longer had to resort to robbery in order to live.



THE STRANGE ADVENTURE OF GAVRILO



For many years, Gavriilo had lived happily with his wife in a pleasant little village in the far North of Italy. He worked hard as a road-mender and was always pleased to reach his home after a day's work—until his wife suddenly became the most bad-tempered person in the whole district.

Why she had become bad-tempered, Gavriilo did not know. Perhaps some magic spell had changed her and made her bad-tempered. All he knew was that she was always angry and cruel, shouting at him and scolding him every moment of the day. One morning, the poor fellow lost all patience.

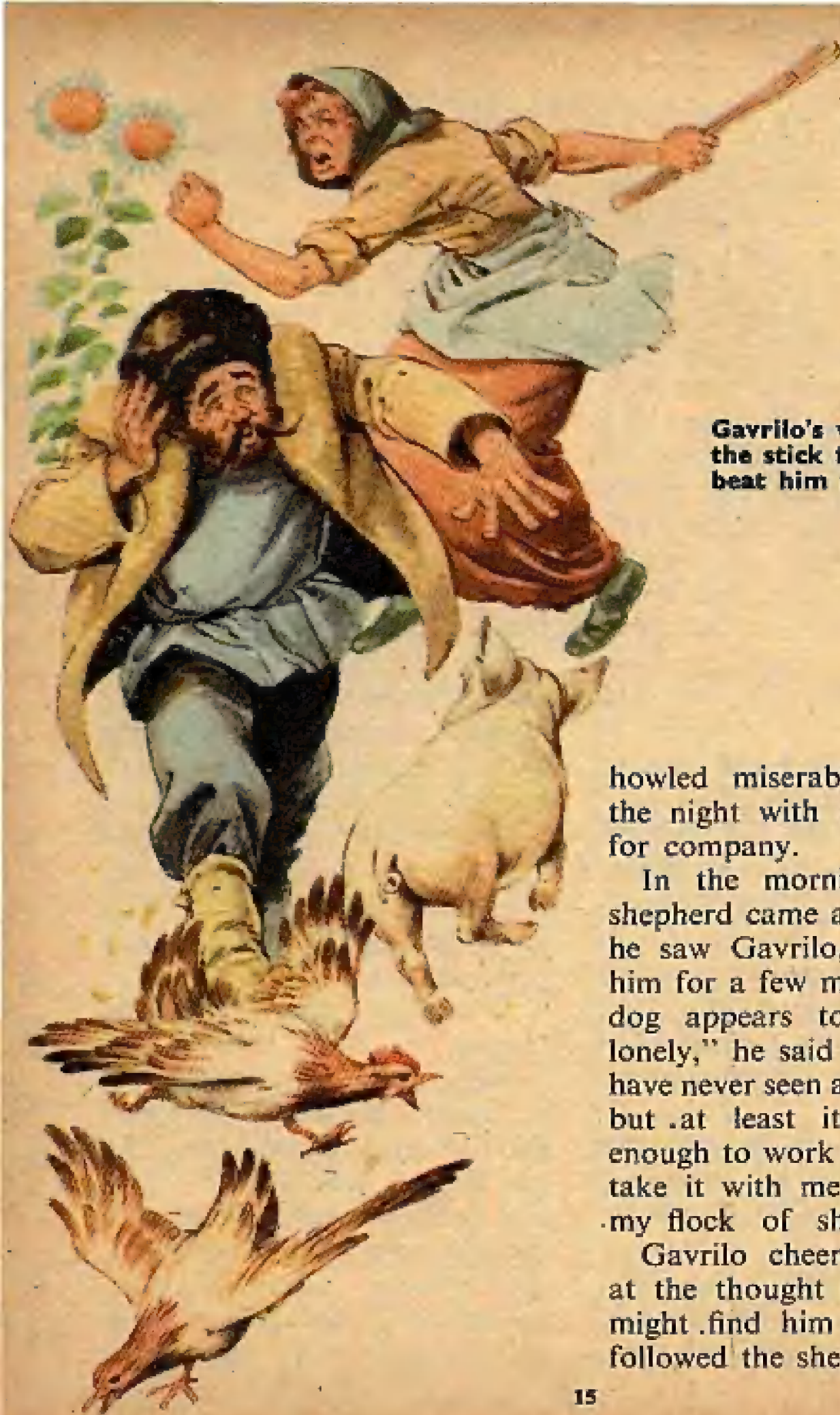
Picking up a stick, he was about to strike her, when she snatched the stick from him.

Beating him furiously, she cried: "I wish you were a dog!"

At once Gavriilo turned into a dog and to escape more blows from the stick he ran as far away into the woods as he could. He was feeling very sad and after roaming around here and there for some time, he decided to return home.

The welcome he got was not a very good one. His wife threw a bucket of hot water over him and drove him away.

Poor Gavriilo did not know what to do. He felt quite useless as a dog and sat down and



Gavrilo's wife snatched the stick from him and beat him furiously.

howled miserably all through the night with only the moon for company.

In the morning, a passing shepherd came along and when he saw Gavriilo, he looked at him for a few moments. "This dog appears to be lost and lonely," he said to himself. "I have never seen a sadder animal, but at least it looks strong enough to work for me. I will take it with me to look after my flock of sheep."

Gavrilo cheered up a little at the thought that somebody might find him useful and he followed the shepherd to where

the flock of sheep grazed on the hillside. In return for food, which the shepherd gave him, he did his job of guarding the sheep very well. He sent a fierce wolf scurrying away and when eagles swooped down, intent upon snatching up a tiny lamb, he jumped at them with snapping jaws and drove them away, too—sometimes with less feathers than when they came.

He had a job and good food, but Gavriilo was not happy. He was always thinking about his own home and his own wife, for he was still very fond of her in spite of her bad temper.

"It is no good, I will have to go back," he said.

One day he left the flock of sheep and ran back to his home, hoping that his wife had changed. She was, however, in an even more bad-tempered mood than ever. Seeing the dog bounding towards her, she shouted at it and picked up a stick.

"Get away out of my sight, you annoying beast," she cried. "Change yourself into a magpie and fly off!"

At this, Gavriilo was changed into a magpie. Flying away, not caring where he was going,

he flew straight into the net of a small boy, who had been trying to catch a wild bird for a long time.

Jumping for joy, the little lad hurried home to his father and showed the magpie to him. His father was a magician and when he looked at the magpie, he said:

"I see a bird with all the usual feathers, but I also see that it is really a different creature altogether."

"What sort of creature, father?" asked the boy.

"We will find out, shall we?" smiled the father and by waving his wand and saying a few magic words, he ordered the magpie to become its normal self.

In a flash the magpie vanished and Gavriilo himself stood before them, almost weeping with joy to find that he was a human being again.

"Thank you, thank you," he gasped.

Puzzled, the magician wanted to know the whole story and Gavriilo quickly told him. "So you have a wife who is cruel and bad-tempered," murmured the magician, when Gavriilo finished his tale. "Very well then, my friend, I will give you my magic wand. You may use it

as you wish for your own good."

Thanking him again for his kindness, Gavriilo returned to his home. Boldly he went inside. His wife had her back to him, as she was putting wood on the fire. Before she could turn round, Gavriilo touched her with the magic wand and said the first thing he thought of, which was:

"Turn yourself into a goat!"

His wife changed at once into a goat, which Gavriilo took to a stable and locked inside. "Now you can stay there without food or anything to make you comfortable," said Gavriilo. "In future I will live my own life."

He set about his road-mending work again and looked after himself at home. For a time, he was quite happy, but he began to feel very lonely without a wife to talk to. "I wonder if by now she feels sorry for what she did to me?" he thought.

Running to the stable, he unlocked the door and touched the goat with the magic wand. "You must not be an animal any longer," he said. "I would be very happy if you would once again be my wife."

In a flash, his wife stood

before him, but she was greatly changed. Her eyes were filled with a look of tenderness and, kneeling down at Gavriilo's feet, she begged him to forgive her.

"My dear husband, from now on I will be a pleasant and



obedient wife," she said.

"I do forgive you," Gavriilo exclaimed.

Telling his wife to go into the house, Gavriilo ran and ran until he found the magician and breathlessly told him what had happened.

"I cannot thank you enough," he gasped, handing back the magic wand. "You said that I could use this for my own good and I think I have done

so. Thank you a thousand times for your help."

With that, Gavriilo hurried back to his home, where he found his smiling wife preparing supper for them both. They sat down at the table together and ate in peace and from that day onwards there was never a cross word spoken between them. The strange adventure of Gavriilo had come to a happy ending.





BURIED TREASURE

Gaurana of Gannavaram was a rich peasant. He and his wife Gauri led a happy and contented life. They were both very thrifty and saved as much money as they could. Gaurana kept all his money safely hidden in a large iron safe with his name painted on it in white.

Now Gaurana had two friends, Venkat and Sobban. They were the only ones who knew that Gaurana possessed so-much money. They longed to lay their hands on Gaurana's hard-earned money, but could think of no way of getting hold of it.

One day Venkat and Sobban, being desperately in need of some money, decided to talk Gaurana into parting with his money. That very same evening the two friends, having

planned how to cheat Gaurana, went to Gaurana's house to pay him a visit.

"Did either of you go to the meeting held at the Village Panchayat Union this afternoon?" Sobban asked, knowing full well that Gaurana had not been at the meeting.

"No," replied Gaurana, "I was not able to go, though I would have liked to have been there to hear what the minister had to say."

"I was there," said Venkat, "and apart from referring to the new branch of the canal to be dug alongside our village, the minister did nothing but praise that man Ganapathy, for all the good he is doing. He said that Ganapathy gave away

money in charities like one gives away water."

"But everyone knows that Ganapathy was almost a pauper when he first came to live in our village," insisted Sobban. "And now he is worth lakhs."

"And what is more," added Venkat, "his lakhs don't remain lakhs but keep on multiplying all the time."

"Your money will never increase in this manner, Gaurana," said Sobban, "how can it when all you do is to keep it safely locked up in your iron safe?"

"It is far better to be honest and live within one's means, than to be a-rogue and become wealthy by hoodwinking others," insisted Gaurana.

The three friends continued arguing, in this manner until very late that night. Both Sobban and Venkat tried their level best to convince Gaurana that it would be much better for him to invest his money in some business and have it increase in value, than to keep it locked up in his safe. And Gaurana putting forward all his reasons for not investing his money in anything and thus making himself vulnerable to others.

However just before midnight Sobban and Venkat managed to talk Gaurana into entrusting his money to them to wisely invest in a project, which they assured him would make him a very rich man within a very short period.

Gaurana, persuaded at last, but still a little diffident, handed over his precious twenty thousand rupees to Sobban and Venkat.

When almost a year had passed, Gaurana decided to go and see his friends and ask them how business was and by how many thousands his money had increased.

He found Sobban and Venkat busy playing a game of dice at Venkat's house. Gaurana sat down in the chair offered him and waited till they had finished their game. Then he asked his friends how the business was getting on and why they hadn't been to see him for so long. Venkat turned pale and put his hand to his head, whilst Sobban began to wring his hands and looked most depressed. In broken sentences Venkat then told Gaurana their tale of woe—how the whole twenty thousand rupees had been lost.

"What, my whole hand-earned twenty thousand gone down the drain?" exclaimed Gaurana hardly able to believe his ears.

"At first we were so desperate that we considered taking some rat poison and putting an end to ourselves," said Venkat, "then we thought the better of it and decided to keep out of your sight for as long as possible."

"Whatever you did would not have given me back my twenty thousand rupees," said Gaurana miserably. Saying this he left Venkat's house and walked home as if he were in a dream.

In the meantime Gauri began to get worried because it was long past Gaurana's dinner time and he still had not returned home. As a rule Gaurana was always a very punctual man.

Gauri knew without Gaurana telling her that he had at last discovered how his so-called friends, Venkat and Sobban, had cheated him out of most of his life's savings.

"Those two rascals have cheated me out of all the twenty thousand I so trustingly handed over to them," Gaurana told her. "But I vow that I



will teach those scoundrels a lesson that they will never forget," he added.

A week later Gaurana pulled himself together and went about his business as usual. Now and then he overheard rumours that it was common knowledge that Venkat and Sobban had taken twenty thousand rupees from him under a false pretext and that they had divided the amount between them.

One morning, a few years later, a messenger was sent to Sobban, asking him to go to Gaurana's house immediately, as Gaurana had suddenly been taken very ill and it was feared that he was dying. When Sobban arrived at Gaurana's



bedside, Gaurana bid him to bend low and in a feeble voice said, "I know that I won't last long Sobban. My only, only worry is that I am leaving Gauri behind, all alone. Will you please look after her?"

"Of course I will look after Gauri," replied Sobban, "it is my duty as your good friend to see that Gauri is well-taken care of after you have gone."

"Ah, you have set my mind at rest," said Gaurana slowly. "All that I now have left in the way of money is twenty-five thousand rupees in cash. I have put this money into twenty-five pots, each containing a thousand rupees. The pots

are buried at regular intervals, five feet apart, along the other walls of my house. The first pot is buried just beneath my bedroom window.

"I understand," said Sobban, unable to hide the look of greed that came into his eyes.

"After I die," continued Gaurana, "when my wife needs money, I have asked her to come to you

"You can trust me," assured Sobban, "but I must entreat you not to tell Venkat what you have just told me. I do not think that he will honour your dying wish."

"As you wish," said Gaurana and closed his eyes.

That same afternoon Gaurana had Venkat called hastily to his bedside. He repeated all that he had said to Sobban and Venkat promised to look after Gauri and see that she had the money only as and when she really needed it.

A week later poor Gaurana died. But before he died, he told Gauri his secret—that would see that she had security for as long as she lived.

A few months after Gaurana's death, Gauri decided that she needed some money. She asked Sobban, who made it a

habit of visiting her every day, for some money. She told him that Gaurana had told her that she was to approach him whenever she needed money for her expenses.

Sobban shook his head and said that he was very sorry; but he had no money whatsoever even for his own day to day requirements. He then suggested that Gauri should sell her house.

"That is the only solution left," said Gauri. "Yes, I will sell the house if I can get a good price for it."

Sobban immediately said that he was willing to buy the house for two thousand rupees, which he could easily borrow from a friend. Gauri said that she would have to consider his proposal.

Sobban and Venkat fearing that Gauri would sell the house

to someone else decided to buy the house jointly for twenty-five thousand rupees.

After collecting the twenty-five thousand rupees from her husband's friends, Gauri left the village and went to stay for a spell with her brother.

Soon after Gauri left there were strange sounds heard coming from her house every night. The villagers thought that Gaurana's ghost had started to visit the house and stayed as far away from it as possible.

Not long afterwards one by one all the walls and finally the roof of Gaurana's house caved in. Everyone thought that it was all the work of Gaurana's restless ghost.

As for Sobban and Venkat, they realized that the dead Gaurana had finally the last word.



STORY FROM GERMANY

BIG HANS

Many years ago, there were a number of poor workers, or serfs, who all lived together in a small village. The village was owned by the lord of the manor and the serfs had to work very hard for him. They worked from dawn to dusk, but they were not unhappy, for although their lord was a strict master, he was not cruel. They did not have a lot to eat but they never went hungry. They did not have fine clothes to wear, but they were never actually in rags. Then, one day, their lord died and a new lord of the manor came to take his place as their master.

The new lord was harsh and cruel. All the serfs had to work ten times harder than before. They were always tired, cold and hungry and they grew very sad.

In the village, lived a young lad named Hans. He was tall, blond, broad-shouldered and as strong as an ox, but he was so lazy, that he had never been known to do a day's work in his life. When it came to harvest time in the village, the serfs were working so hard for their new lord, that they did not have time to harvest their own poor crops and yet Hans just sat under a tree, idly watching them. At last, they could stand it no longer. "Unless you help with the work, you can starve this Winter," they said. "You sit around all day doing nothing, yet eat enough food for six men."

"I am sorry about that," replied Hans cheerfully. "Why did you not ask me before? I will be glad to help with your threshing."

The villagers looked on in surprise, as Hans tore two small trees from the ground and tied them together. Then he used them as a flail, to thresh the grain and in no time it was all done.

Of course, the serfs were delighted, but the lord and his men were worried. 'If this Big Hans decided to thresh us, like he did that corn, we could do nothing to stop him. He is too strong and powerful. We must get rid of him before he can do any harm,' they said to each other.

The bailiff, who looked after the lord's farm for him, had a plan. He asked Big Hans to go

up the river, to clear a place where it had been blocked by a large fall of rock. When Hans went off to do so, the bailiff and his men followed. They waited until Hans was in the middle of the stream and then began hurling large boulders down on him, hoping to drown him, but he merely brushed the stones aside and, not realising what the bailiff was doing, said, "These are the biggest hailstones I have ever seen."

Not to be put off, the bailiff sent for a huge millstone, which he threw at Hans, but Hans only caught it, put his head through the middle and said, "Thank you for my fine, new





collar.

"We need something heavier," ordered the angry bailiff and he sent for a big iron bell, that took three men even to lift it. However, when he and his men threw it at Hans, the boy caught that, too, thinking it

was some sort of hat. The bailiff went back to the lord of the manor looking very worried. "Unless we get rid of this boy soon," he said, "no one is safe."

The lord thought hard for a minute, then he sent for Hans and said, "Hans, I find I am suddenly short of money. I have heard that the Devil keeps great sacks of gold, so full of money that only a strong man could carry one away. Go down to Hell and ask the devil to give you one. When you return, you shall have a share of it for yourself."

Hans went off and eventually found the long dark path that led to Hell. He came to an old iron door and knocked on it so hard, that it crashed down in front of him. Stepping over it, he came into a huge hall, lit by the flames from a thousand fires.

All this noise brought the devil running to see what was wrong. When Hans told him he had come for some gold, the devil was very angry and tried to throw Hans out, but Big Hans struck him a blow that made all his teeth rattle and his tail twitch.

The devil let go at once. "I will make a bargain with you,"

he said, "if you can win three wagers against me, you can have your gold. If not, your soul is mine."

Hans agreed and devil took a hunting horn and put it to his lips. He blew such a blast on it that it put out seven of the thousand fires of Hell. Then it was the turn of Hans. His blast echoed round the hall and the devil watched in dismay, as a hundred fires went out.

Then the devil picked up a large boulder, as big as an oven, and hurled that far across the hall "You cannot beat that," he said confidently.

Hans, however, could. He picked up the boulder, as if it were a fruit cake, and began tossing it lightly from hand to hand.

"Wait a moment, while I run back to Earth and pull up some oak trees to strengthen the roof," said Hans. "I





would not like it to fall."

The devil was now shaking with fear. "Go no further," he pleaded, "you have won, you have won." He gave Hans the sack of gold and Hans took it back to his lord. The lord was astonished. He had never expected to see Hans

again.

"You have done well," he said slyly. "Come and celebrate with us."

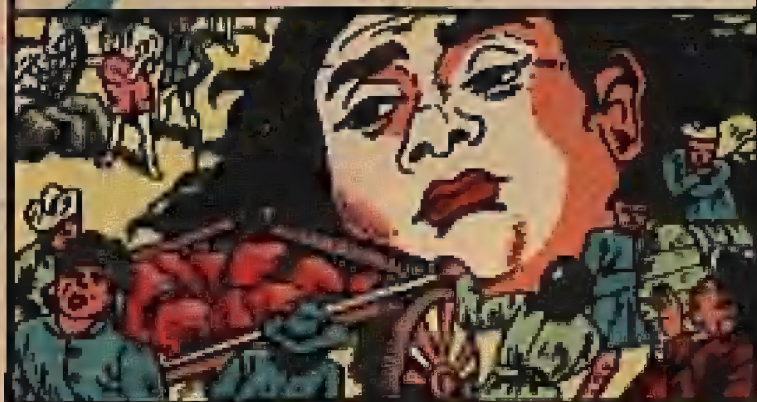
The lord and his men waited until the drinks began to make Hans sleepy. At last, he slipped off his chair, asleep.

"This is our chance," the village lord said, "take him into the courtyard. We will pile brushwood and logs around him and set fire to them. We can be rid of Big Hans for good."

However, soon after the fire had been started, the heat from the flames woke Hans up again. When he saw the lord and his men laughing, he was so angry that he leapt up and dashed from the flames, seizing two trees which he completely uprooted from the ground. With these he set about the lord and his men, just as if he were threshing corn, and that was the end of all of them.

Hans took back the sack of gold and returned to his village. When the villagers heard about him, they voted at once that Hans should be the new lord of the manor and he was so kind and well-meaning, that they could not have had a better one.

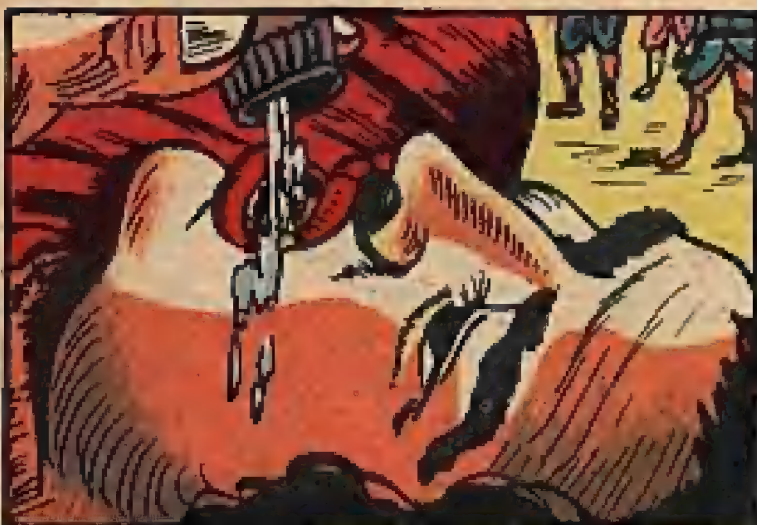
GULLIVER'S TRAVELS



These tiny people brought joints of meat, but I have no idea what kind. Then there were loaves of bread and fruit, which all tasted so good.



I ate the meat, several joints at a time, and consumed many loaves of bread. It was not that I was greedy, but everything was so very small.



Obviously they gave me a sort of drug mixed with the wine I drank, because I soon fell into a deep sleep.



Whilst I slept, these tiny people removed all my bindings, and the tiny arrows which had pierced my skin.



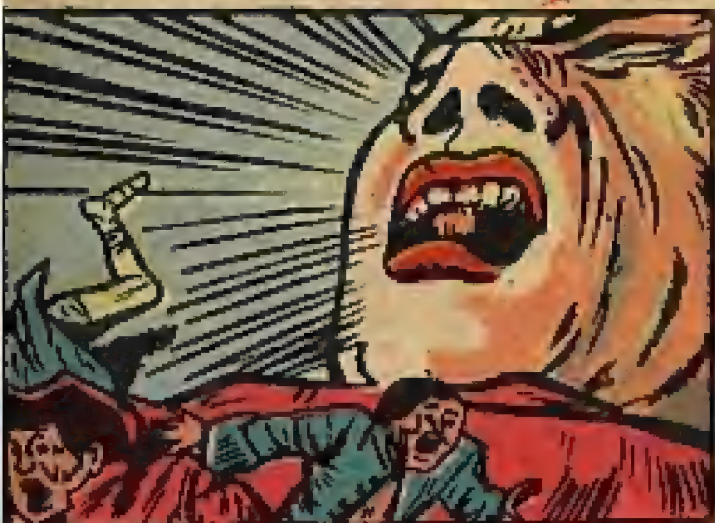
Five hundred carpenters and engineers built a wooden frame 7 feet long and 4 feet wide, mounted on twentytwo wheels. When this trolley was finished, nine hundred of the strongest men raised me by pulleys and ropes and gently moved my body on to the trolley.



15000 horses, each only about four inches in height, were harnessed to the trolley to pull me to the city which was about half a mile away.



Whilst I was being taken to the city, and still fast asleep, three young men clambered on my face curious as to the looks of such a giant.



One of the young men stuck his pike into the tip of my nose. This tickled me so that I awakened with a violent sneeze.



My carriage stopped at an ancient temple, which later I found to be the largest in the kingdom. I got up, stretched, and looked around. There on my left was the city. It was quite big, and all the buildings were lovely, but not one more than two feet in height.



I was tethered by one leg by a chain to the door of the temple, which only allowed me to take a couple of steps in either direction.



By now all the inhabitants of the city had gathered to see me. Then what must be the Emperor, with a glittering retinue, arrived.



I bowed to the Emperor, and this apparently pleased him. He explained that I was in the Kingdom of Lilliput, and he ordered that I should have every comfort, and that six of his learned scholars would teach me their language.



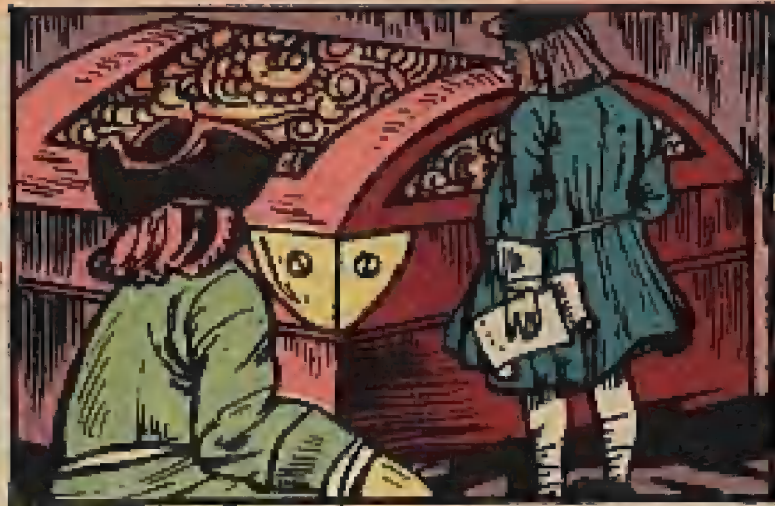
A few days later, two officers under orders from the Emperor, arrived to take an inventory of my belongings.



I took up the officers in my hands, and put them into each of my pockets in turn, so that they could discover what I possessed.



'In one coat pocket of the man-mountain, we found a great piece of coarse cloth, large enough to carpet a banqueting room.' This was my handkerchief.



'In the other coat pocket was a large silver chest, which with great difficulty we managed to open, and one of us got inside'. This was my snuff box.



'Inside the chest, it was knee deep in some brown powder, which when stirred, caused us to sneeze and sneeze.' They did not like snuff.



'In the side pockets we found two heavy engines, made of wood with hollow iron pillars. We do not know what these can be used for.'



'In his waistcoat pocket there was something making a loud noise. We ordered the man-giant to show us this engine.'



'This engine was round in shape, half silver, and half some transparent metal, with strange figures circularly drawn. The man-giant says it tells the time.'

NATURE

CATS. 2

TABBY cats are extremely common domestic cats; there are three colours which are found. These are the Red Tabby, the Silver Tabby and the Brown Tabby.

Of these, the Brown Tabby is the most common. It is fawn with a patterning of brown.

The Silver Tabby is pale grey with a patterning of darker grey and this is very frequently seen in Paris.

The Red Tabby is beige with a patterning in ginger.

The picture on the other side of this index card shows a Red Tabby.

Tabby cats have a great variety of patterns but the best specimens have markings which are clear and symmetrical.

The coat of a tabby cat should be thick and shiny.

NATURE

CATS. 4

THE picture on the other side of this index card shows the sacred cat of Burma or the Birman.

The Birman is a long-haired cat with colourings rather like those of the Siamese.

The Birman is supposed to be descended from the sacred cats which lived in the temples of Burma before the time of the Buddha. They were used as oracles.

According to legend, one such cat belonged to the priest, Mun-Ha. He was a white cat called Sinh. But, when his master died, he jumped on to the throne and put his head against Mun-Ha's body. As he did this, the soul of the priest passed into the cat's body. The cat's fur became creamy in colour and his eyes became a beautiful blue.

The cats known as Burmese cats are quite different and are short-haired.

NATURE

CATS. 1

THERE are a number of different kinds of Turkish cats. Some have long fur and some have short fur, some are one colour and some another. There is also one variety which has a pure white coat and has one eye blue and one eye green. This is the Ankara cat.

The cat in the picture on the other side of this index card is not an Ankara cat, however, but another sort of Turkish cat.

This one has a very long, thick white coat and its tail and parts of its head are auburn. The eyes are amber in colour and very beautiful.

A peculiarity of this type of cat is that it likes swimming. Even a kitten will quite happily enter fast-flowing water or still water and swim for some time.

NATURE

CATS. 3

AT one time, it was believed that the wild cat (*Felis sylvestris*) was the original cat from which the domestic cat is descended. This is now, however, thought to be untrue.

Wild cats are more powerfully built than domestic cats. Their limbs are rather longer and the head is rounder.

The tail of a wild cat is comparatively short and has a thick tuft at the tip. The feet, too, are quite black.

Wild cats at one time were fairly common in central and northern Europe but nowadays are becoming increasingly rare. They are very vicious animals and will attack many different kinds of animals and also fish. They live in crevasses in rocks and in hollow trees.

The picture on the other side of this index card shows a wild cat.

NATURE
CATS. 1



NATURE
CATS. 2



NATURE
CATS. 3



NATURE
CATS. 4



HISTORY

EARLY BOATS 1



HISTORY

EARLY BOATS 2



HISTORY

EARLY BOATS 3



HISTORY

EARLY BOATS 4



HISTORY

EARLY BOATS 2

A VERY early type of boat was the coracle. This was made with a framework of wooden laths or tarred basket-work, covered with bark or animal skins.

The skins or bark were stretched over the framework and then bent to form a saucer-shaped vessel, suitable for one man.

The great advantage of the coracle was that it was usually made to fit the requirements of a particular person, so that it could be either small or large. It was also very light and could be carried without too much difficulty overland from one place to another.

Coracles were often used by fishermen. Two have been used to tow a fishing net, the fishing net itself being in the charge of only one man.

HISTORY

EARLY BOATS 1

ALTHOUGH perhaps most early rafts were made of logs of wood, wood was not the only material used for these primitive boats. Really, anything buoyant was suitable.

Some people used bundles of reeds, others used bamboos and others, yet again, used gourds. A calabash is a form of gourd and it is possible to balance on one of these and propel yourself along by paddling with your arms.

Another sort of raft is one that is made of inflated skins. This type was often used in areas where timber of any size was very limited.

The picture on the other side of this index card shows a primitive raft made from inflated hides. A craft similar to this is shown on an Assyrian bas relief of about the year 1000 B.C.

HISTORY

EARLY BOATS 4

BOATS have been used for many hundreds of years, since even primitive man felt the necessity to transport himself and his goods across stretches of water.

A number of the early types of boats are still used today, particularly by uncivilised communities.

The picture on the other side of this index card shows a boat used by the aborigines of Arnhem Land in Australia.

It is a canoe made from a single sheet of eucalyptus bark, lashed together with strips of cane over poles that keep the canoe at least fairly rigid.

It is an extremely frail craft and perhaps only a few steps beyond the first boat.

HISTORY

EARLY BOATS 3

A DEVELOPMENT from the raft was the "dug-out". This was formed by hollowing out a tree trunk. It had certain advantages over the raft as it was, comparatively speaking, water-tight and quicker.

There were, however, disadvantages. In order to make a "dug-out" large enough to transport a number of goods, a tree of considerable girth had to be found. The early "dug-out", too, was rather apt to be unstable, so that the hull had to be shaped and a keel had to be added.

The first "dug-outs" are thought to have been made by shaping the outside of the logs with stones. The insides were then burned out over several days.

When the burning was completed, the charred wood was smoothed with stones—a long and laborious process.

THE WONDERFUL ADVENTURES OF BARON MUNCHAUSEN

This is Baron Munchausen speaking to you again and I am going to tell all CHANDA-MAMA readers some more of the very wonderful adventures which have happened to me during my travels around the world.

As you know, I have always been fond of the sea (whether I have actually been IN it or just merely ON it in a ship) and once I was in great danger of being lost forever in the warm Mediterranean Sea, a pleasant ocean off the coast of Southern France.

I was swimming happily underwater, enjoying the sights of the rocks and sea-plants and darting shoals of fish, when suddenly I noticed a great shape moving towards me.

It was a huge fish, quite the largest I had ever seen. In the sea I have seen whales a little bigger, but as you so rightly know, they are not really fish.

This monster fish was making for me with the greatest speed,



and it was plain that its intention was to swallow me. I could not possibly dodge away, so I at once reduced myself to the smallest size by closing my feet together and placing my hands at my sides, just as his huge mouth closed over me.

I passed directly between his jaws and into his stomach,

where I found myself in total darkness and nice and warm, as you may imagine.

Comfort and warmth, however, were not enough to satisfy me. I wanted to get out and at last I had the idea that by giving him pain he would be glad to get rid of me.

As I had plenty of room to move around, I played several pranks, such as hopping and jumping and turning somersaults—but the thing that seemed to disturb him most was when I began to dance a hornpipe.

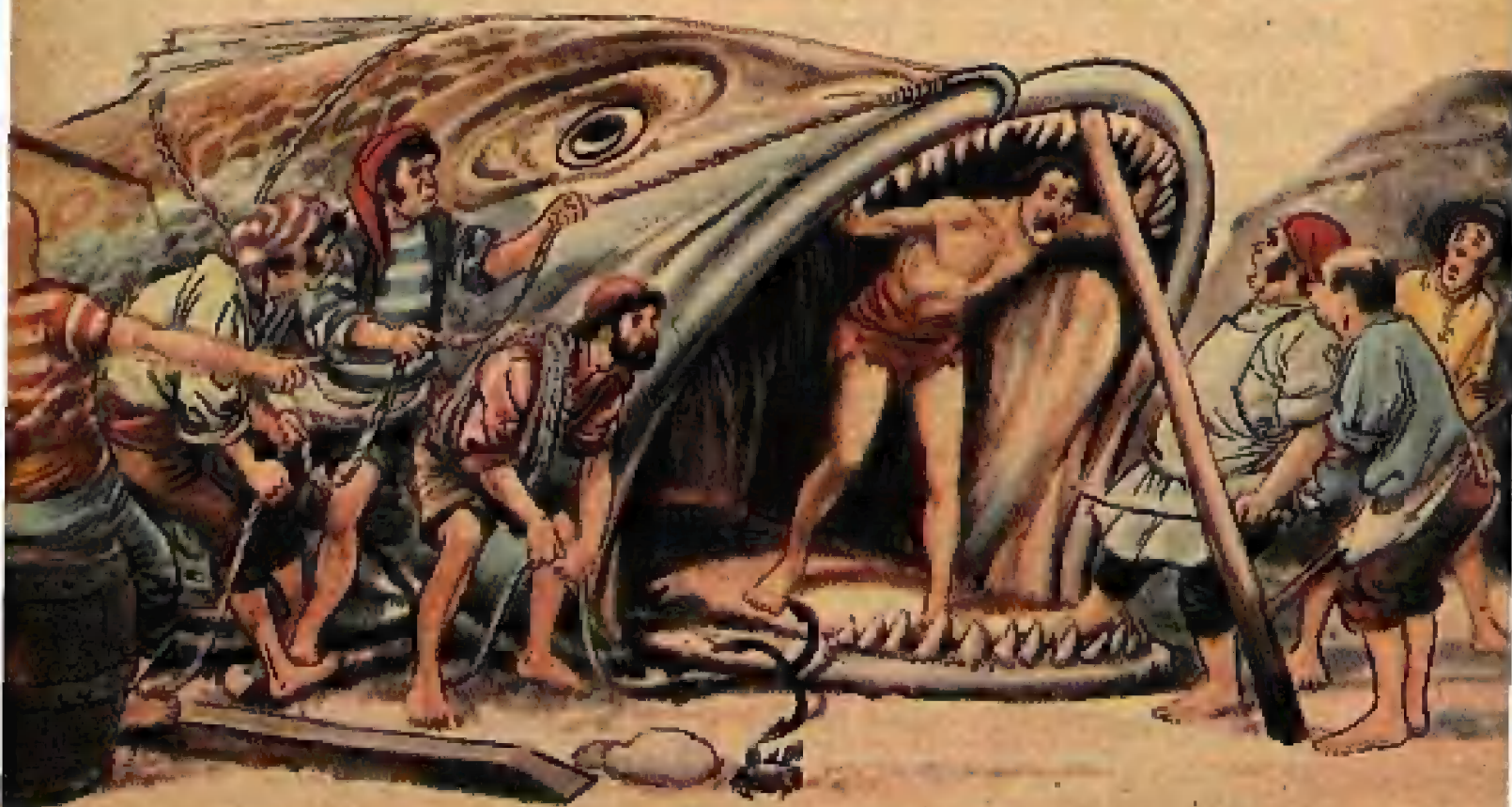
He roared horribly and stood up out of the water with his head and shoulders exposed.

As a result of this he was seen by the crew of a French fishing-boat, which happened to be sailing by, and they harpooned him in a few minutes.

They dragged the monster ashore and I heard the fishermen talking among themselves as to how to cut up the huge catch in the best pieces for quick sale in the market.

Alarm filled me. I was in the most dreadful fear that I might be cut also, and as soon as I saw a glimmer of light when the mouth of the fish opened, I called out loudly to be released.

Hearing a human voice coming from within the fish, the



fishermen were astonished—even more so when they saw me come out of its mouth!

"Thank you, gentlemen all," I said and I told them the whole story. They almost split their sides with laughing.

After taking some refreshment with the fishermen, I jumped back into the sea and swam to where I had left my clothes, none the worse for my strange adventure.

Shortly afterwards another amazing thing happened when I was at sea, on board a French merchant-ship on its way to Gibraltar with a cargo of African peanuts for the apes which live upon the famous Rock.

One morning, as I was standing on deck, admiring the beauty of the sea and sky, I saw a round thing in the air, which appeared to be about the size of a billiard-ball, and it had something hanging from it.

I at once took up my gun, without which I never travel if I can help it. I loaded it and fired at the globe, but with no effect, for the object was at too great a distance.

Putting in a double amount of gun power I fired again, and this second try succeeded. I hit the thing in the sky and it



started to come down, slowly at first and then quicker and quicker, until it was large enough for me to recognise.

"Bless my soul," I exclaimed. "It is a balloon, one of those new machines which are lighter than air—and the basket below contains the pilot, which is the name they give to the man who drives it."

The balloon came down and down, and fell within two yards of me on the deck of the

merchant-ship. I helped out the pilot and stood him on his feet. He wore a long jacket and I could not help noticing that his pockets were so crammed with bags of money that they weighed his coat down so that it trailed on the ground.

"Good sir, you must have done some great service to the human race to be loaded with such an amount of money," I said.

He answered with a sad smile.

"My dear friend, you are mistaken," he said. "These are not bags of money, but bags filled with sand from the coast of Cornwall. I see that you know little about the art of ballooning, so perhaps it would be wise for me to explain."

He tipped the bags of sand out of his pockets and seemed much relieved to get rid of the weight of them.

"They are what we call ballast," he went on. "If I wanted the balloon to go higher, I would throw out one, you understand. It was about seven or eight days ago, I can't properly remember, that I ascended in the balloon from Land's End, in the county of Cornwall, in England. At first

all went well and then the direction of the wind changed ten minutes later and, instead of driving me towards Exeter where I intended to land, I was driven towards the sea and then over some more land, which was strange to me—then over still more sea!"

"Which accounts for your arrival here in the Mediterranean Sea," I said. "But, tell me, good sir, if balloons go up, is it not possible also to bring them down?"

"That is how they are designed," he admitted. "In the balloon itself is a great quantity of gas. There is a valve, which when opened releases some of the light gas, thus allowing the balloon to sink earthwards. Alas, being in such a state of alarm upon finding myself heading away from Exeter, I tugged too hard on the cord which works the valve and broke it. I have thus been drifting in the sky for a whole eight days, and might have gone on forever but for your excellent shooting."

"Think nothing of it," I replied modestly. "I, Baron Munchausen, have been only too happy to be of service to you."

STORY FROM RUSSIA

THE THREE SISTERS

Many years ago, in a far-off land, there lived three sisters. They lived in a little country cottage by themselves and, since there was very little work for them to do, they spent most of their time idly daydreaming.

One day, when they were sitting in their garden, they talked about what it would be like to be married to the Czar, the ruler of their land.

"If I were married to him," said the first sister, who was short and very plump, "I would spend all my time cooking him delicious meals."

"Eating is all that you ever think about," the second sister snapped, for she was tall and thin. "Now, if I married the Czar, I would spend all day at my loom, waving the finest cloths and tapestries for him."



"What would you do, little sister?" they both asked the other girl together.

The third sister was a slender, fair-haired girl and the other two did not really like her because she was so much prettier than they were.

"I would bear him a son," she replied, "and he would be a hero."

It so happened that the Czar himself chanced to pass by at that very moment. He liked the idea of a hero for a son and seeing what an attractive young girl she was, he asked her to become his wife.



"Your sisters may come to Court too," the Czar told her. "They can be cook and Court weaver."

The two elder sisters were wild with rage and did their best to find some way of getting their own back on their sister, now the Empress.

However, soon afterwards, the Czar had to leave for the wars and it pleased them greatly to see their sister so sad and mournful, as she awaited his return, but their new-found happiness turned to rage once more when she gave birth to the Czar's son. She decided to call him Hero.

It is impossible to describe the wild fury of the elder sisters. In their rage, they sent a cruel message to the Czar, telling him that the Empress had given birth to a son who was crippled.

This news made the Czar very sad and he ordered that both the Empress and her son be banished from his Kingdom.

The wicked sisters, however, were not content with this. They told the Czar's ministers that the Empress and her baby were both to be shut up in a barrel and thrown into the sea.

The order was carried out and the Empress was left helplessly floating in the sea, sealed



up in the barrel with her child.

Then, as though by a miracle, the son began to grow bigger and bigger, until he became a strong and courageous young man. With one blow, he knocked the top from the barrel and managed to guide it towards the shore; but it was not the land they had left. It was a desert island.

The ex-Empress was very sad and rather frightened, but Hero did not lose hope.

"I will make a bow, mother", he told her, "and carve some stones, long and pointed, for arrows. We will be able to live on what I hunt."

"We cannot do that forever," his mother replied, "and who would ever find us on such a lonely island?"

One day, when Hero was out with his bow and arrows, he spotted a swan swimming near the shore, anxiously flapping its wings, as if it were frightened. Then, circling high in the sky, he saw a vulture, hovering, above the helpless swan. Quickly,



Hero let fly an arrow and brought the vulture crashing down into the sea.

"Thank you," said the swan and Hero just stared. Surely it had not been the swan speaking?

"I said 'thank you'," the swan repeated. "You see, I am no ordinary swan. I am a magic swan. You saved my life with the swiftness of your bow. If you had not have been there, I would have been killed by the vulture."

"I know about the trouble that has been brought upon your mother and yourself and as you helped me, so I will help you. Go back and find your mother and tell her to lie down and sleep. You must do the same. When you awake, things will be different."

Hero went back and told his mother all that had happened to him.

"It cannot do any harm," she said, when he told her what the swan had said, "although I do not really expect it to do much good, either."

Hero and his mother lay down on the shore and fell asleep. They slept for many hours and when they awoke, they could scarcely believe their

eyes. There, stretched before them, was a marvellous city of white marble and gold. In its midst stood the Royal court.

As they stood looking at it, an old man came up to them.

"We have been expecting you," he said and bowed very low.

"Expecting us?" asked Hero in surprise. "Why, we did not even know that we were coming ourselves."

"That is right," his mother



Hero let fly an arrow.

nodded. "I was the Empress of a far-off land, but because of a wicked plot by my two jealous sisters, my baby son and I were sealed up in a barrel and cast into the sea."

"Eventually," went on Hero, "I grew strong enough to break the top of the barrel and we drifted ashore on to a desert island. There we have lived for many months. How could you possibly be expecting us?"

"You are to become King of this city, indeed of this whole, wonderful island," replied the old man. "We knew of your troubles and we watched over you to see that you came to no harm."

At these words, a whole host of soldiers, artisans, nobles, women and children came run-

ning towards them.

"Our king, our king!" one cried.

"Welcome, sire, a thousand times!" shouted a second.

"May you rule over us wisely, for many long years," called out another.

Then, they all began to chant "Long Live the King," "Long Live the King," and they picked him up and carried him in triumph to the fine Royal palace, where the rich coronation feast was waiting for them.

Hero was officially made their King and his mother, the ex-Empress, became the Queen-Mother and they both lived happily at Court for the rest of their days.





THE TWO PRINCES

Going back many years, the kingdom of Rada was ruled by King Nagaraj and his consort, Queen Sarala.

Then came the day when a troupe of strolling players visited the capital. The star performer of these players was a girl named Lasya, who was not only extremely beautiful, but was a gifted singer and dancer.

When the players gave a performance at the palace, King Nagaraj was so enraptured by the beauty of Lasya, that he decided on the spot that she would become his second wife. The following morning the King sent for the leader of the troupe and offered him one thousand pieces of gold for the hand of Lasya.

At first the leader demurred, but at the sight of so many

gold pieces, his greedy mind won, and so Lasya became a queen, and was in many ways the King's favourite wife.

In the course of time Queen Sarala had a son, who was asked Rahul. The next year Queen Lasya also had a baby son, whom they named Yashpal.

As these boys grew up, Prince Rahul, the heir apparent, excelled his half brother, Prince Yashpal. In every way, as a consequence the younger prince was beset with jealousy, which in time grew into an ungovernable hatred.

One day the two princes were having a sham fight with maces, and Yashpal, who was extremely poor at any form of combat, lost his temper and dealt Rahul a foul blow. Rahul was



so annoyed, he threw aside his mace, and sent Yashpal reeling with a blow from his fist.

When Queen Lasya saw her son with a very unbecoming black eye, she flew into a rage and stormed into the King's chamber. "My son has been grievously injured by Rahul, who is nothing but a tyrant and bully. I command you to punish Rahul immediately."

The King, who was always a little scared of Queen Lasya's fiery outbursts, sent for Prince Rahul and threatened him with expulsion from the kingdom, and his right to accede to the

throne if he did not treat Prince Yashpal as his equal.

Queen Sarala was disturbed when she heard the story of the King's wrath towards her son, as she knew that Lasya schemed that Yashpal should one day become King of Rada. The Queen hurried to Prince Rahul's chambers. "My son," she entreated, "I know that whilst you remain here your life will be in danger. Go, I beg of you, to my father's kingdom of Magadha where you will be well protected."

"No, mother," Rahul said. "A prince should not run from danger. I shall stay here and show everyone that I mean to be crown prince."

"You speak bravely my son", the Queen murmured, trying to hide her tears. "But at least let me give you the gold to raise an army so that you will always be able to stand up against the king's unjust anger".

"That would be treason" the Prince replied, shaking his head. "I will stay here and fight my own battles."

Nevertheless Queen Sarala's fears proved to be right. The people of the kingdom loved Prince Rahul who they considered to be a crown prince of

outstanding virtue. At the same time, the people despised Prince Yashpal whose mean character was obvious to everyone. Queen Lasya was forced to realise that whilst Prince Rahul lived, there was little hope of her son ascending the throne. Determined not to be outdone in her schemes, Queen Lasya hired a gang of brigands to waylay and kill the crown prince.

But the attempts to assassinate Prince Rahul failed, thanks to a number of his friends, led by a young nobleman named Gadadhar, who saw to it that the prince was never left unguarded.

Gadadhar, in spite of his

bravery, was inclined to be hotheaded. One morning accosting Prince Yashpal at the palace gates, he caught him by the arm and in a menacing voice shouted. "You have instigated attempts on the life of the crown prince. Let any harm befall His Highness, and your life will pay for it."

From then onwards hatred and jealousy came to the surface, and the followers of both princes were ready to draw swords at the slightest pretext.

The climax came a short time later, when a trader brought a fine white horse to the palace. Gadadhar arranged to buy the horse for the crown



prince. But before the horse could be taken to the stables, Prince Yashpal happened to pass, and demanded that the trader sell the horse to him.

"Alas, Your Highness," the trader said, shrugging his shoulders. "The steed has already been sold to the crown prince."

Prince Yashpal burst out laughing. "If this horse has been sold to the crown prince, then it must be mine. For soon I shall be crown prince of the land."

Everyone within hearing was shocked at such an outburst, and when Prince Yashpal's servants went to lead the horse away, Gadadhar and his friends drew their swords, and with bloodthirsty yells, attacked Prince Yashpal's followers.

At the first glimpse of drawn steel, Prince Yashpal and most of his followers turned tail and fled for protection inside the palace. Nevertheless several of his men were killed in the affray. When the King learnt of this outrage, which Queen Lasya said was a dastardly plot to murder her son, the King ordered that Prince Rahul and his followers be banished from the kingdom.

There were mutterings and

downcast faces, when the people heard the proclamation that their beloved crown prince was to be sent into exile. The most sorrowful figure was Queen Sarala, who tearfully begged her son to go to his grandfather's court at Magadha.

With a heavy heart the crown prince, accompanied by Gadadhar and the rest of his loyal followers, rode out of the capital.

Eventually the party reached the river Ganga which they had to cross. The great river was in flood, and although more rain seemed likely, Prince Rahul and his party decided to swim their horses across. All went well at first, then, when the far shore looked so close, they were struck by wind lashed rain. Prince Rahul fighting against the overpowering current felt himself being relentlessly carried further and further down the river. Clutching tight to the bridle of his terror stricken horse, Prince Rahul at last managed to reach the bank on the other side of the river.

For a time he lay exhausted, then tethering his horse to a nearby tree, he wandered along the river bank to find Gadadhar and the rest of his followers.



But alas, there was no trace of any of them, and in the end Prince Rahul sadly realised that all his friends had been drowned.

Although most of his possessions had been lost when crossing the river, Prince Rahul decided to carry on with his journey to Magadha, relying on the hospitality of the lowly country folk for food and shelter.

Eventually Prince Rahul came to the kingdom of Jhanispure, and on the outskirts of the capital city he came across a number of gamblers playing dice.

They seemed a jovial party, so the prince stayed and wat-

ched the game. Soon one of the gamblers invited him to try his luck. At first he demurred, because he could ill afford to lose the few coins and jewels he possessed. But perhaps the goddess of fortune would smile on him, so he joined the circle of players. At first he lost, then luck turned his way with a vengeance, and he won all the money the others had.

The gamblers took their losses in good part, and would have departed with a shrug and a joke, but Prince Rahul bid them stay. "I have been lucky enough to win all your money, he said, "But let us share it equally and part good friends."



The gamblers had never heard of such generosity and when the prince told them of his adventurous journey, they immediately resolved to be his bodyguard, and ride with him to Magadha.

At that time the King of Jhanispure was celebrating "Nag Panchami", the festival of the serpents. Whilst watching this festival, Prince Rahul saw the lovely Princess of Jahnispure, and vowed then and there, that one day he would win the fair princess as his bride.

When he spoke to his newly found friends of his desire to wed the princess, they swore that they would lend their help. So the next day his friends sought an audience with the King, and told His Majesty the story of Prince Rahul; his exile;

his journey to Magadha; and how the prince had fallen in love with the princess.

The King was intrigued by this unusual story, and sent for the prince. The King and the princess were so taken by the charm and stately bearing of Prince Rahul, the betrothal of the young couple was soon announced.

Prince Rahul's joy knew no bounds, when one day his old friend Gadadhar appeared at court. Gadadhar told how he had been struck unconscious by debris when crossing the river Ganga, and had been rescued by wood cutters several miles down the river. Gadadhar went on to say that fearing that his prince had been drowned, he had no desire or the courage to return to Rada, but stayed with the woodcutters in the forest. But as soon as he heard the welcome news of Prince Rahul's betrothal, he rode night and day to rejoin the Prince.

The marriage of Prince Rahul and the Princess took place soon afterwards, but the celebrations ended, when a messenger arrived with the disquieting news that Prince Rahul's father, the King of

Rada, had died suddenly, and Prince Yashpal had seized the throne.

Prince Rahul despatched an envoy to Rada, demanding his right as the crown prince, to succeed his father as King of Rada. When Prince Yashpal refused to listen to the envoy, Prince Rahul marched on Rada at the head of a large army, commanded by Gadadhar.

A great battle was fought on the plains of Rada, and many were slain in a bitter hand-to-hand encounter. But the day was won Prince Rahul when at the head of his cavalry swept through the enemy ranks. Prince Rahul fought his way to Prince Yashpal, who was vainly trying to rally his men to stand and fight on.

When the two princes came face to face, Prince Yashpal tried to defend himself, but he

was no match for Prince Rahul, who knocked Yashpal's sword from his hand, and was about to strike him down, when he suddenly remembered his father's gift of mercy.

Sheathing his sword, Prince Rahul commanded his half brother to surrender. "For the sake of your mother and our father, your life will be spared."

When Queen Lasya heard of Prince Rahul's merciful act, she was ashamed of her past enmity and begged Prince Rahul to forgive her.

"Mother", replied Prince Rahul. "You have nothing to fear. Both you and Prince Yashpal are dear to my heart."

When he ascended the throne, Rahul proved to be a great king, beloved by his subjects. Eventually he became the ruler of both the kingdoms of Jhanis-pure and Magadha.





Stories from **MAHABHARATA**

The story so far:

The Pandava princes after many hardships caused by the enmity of their cousins, the Kaurava princes, were at last given half the Kuru kingdom, and Prince Yudhishthira, the eldest son of the late King Pandu, was crowned king of this new kingdom, and built a new capital named Indraprastha, on the banks of the river Jumna.

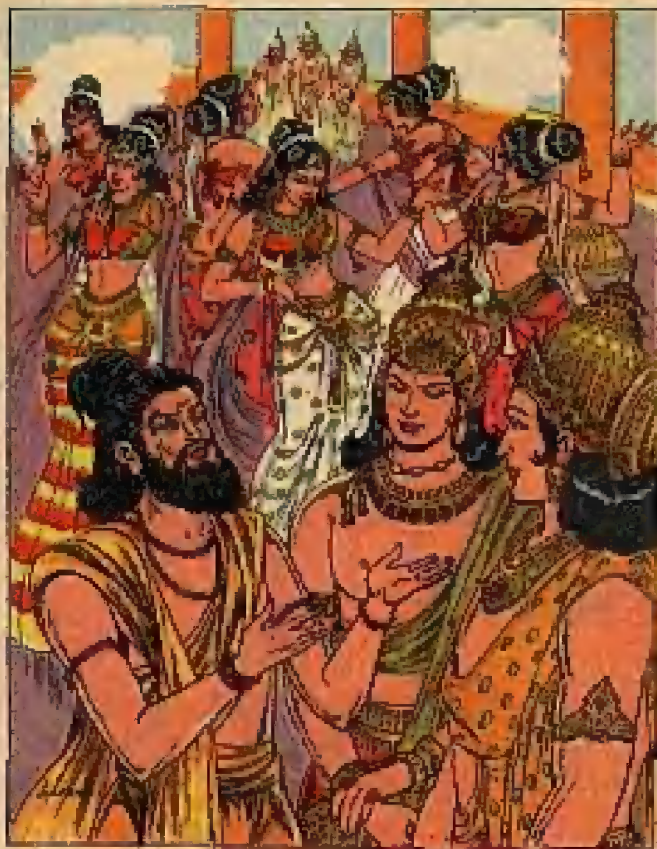
Not long afterwards, Prince Arjuna goes on a year's exile, and in his wandering came to Dwaraka, the kingdom of Sri Krishna, where he met Krishna's sister Subhadra, whom he married.

The following summer Sri Krishna and Prince Arjuna, with Draupadi and Subhadra spent many pleasant weeks beside the river Yumuna.

One morning as they were all reclining on the bank of the river, a strange bearded figure came towards them from out of the forest.

"Fear not," said Krishna with a smile. "For I recognize our visitor. It is Agni, the God of Fire. But he looks as though he is in pain."

When the God of Fire came close, he raised his arm in greeting. "Hear me, O Princes," he roared, with his deep voice. "Brahma, the



Agni, God of Fire begs Sri Krishna and Arjuna for help

God of Creation, has advised me to burn down the medicinal forest of Khandava in order to cure my accursed indigestion. But Indra, the King of Gods, will not permit the burning. So I crave your protection whilst I carry out this task."

The Princes readily assured the God of Fire of their protection. But Arujna who realised the difficulties said, "O God of Fire, as you know a warrior must never underrate his opponents, nor can he

afford to be unmindful of his fighting gear and weapons. We badly need a chariot that is light and fleet, with horses to match, together with a bow that will never break, and other weapons so that we can combat with the power of the Gods in fighting us."

Immediately the God of Fire invoked the presence of Varuna, the God of the Waters. When Varuna appeared, Agni beseeched him to give the princes the Gandiva, which was the magic bow with a never emptying quiver of arrows. Agni also asked for the war chariot with the likeness of God Hanuman on its pennant, and for the discus.

The God of the Waters gave the weapons, then promptly disappeared.

The discus in the hands of Krishna was a deadly weapon, and when thrown could kill several opponents, and then uncannily return to the hands of the thrower.

Now well armed, the princes told the God of Fire to start burning down the forest.

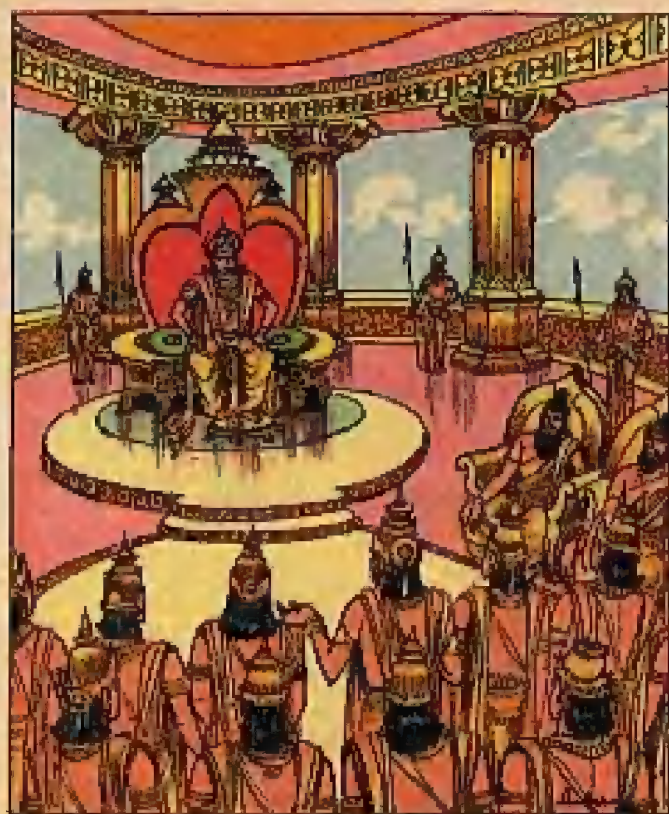
Soon the whole sky was lit with huge tongues of fire. Huge medicinal trees were roaring torches of flame. Nothing

could exist in such a conflagration. Wild animals tried to escape from the inferno, but the princes drove them back into the flames, as a sacrificial offering to the God of Fire.

Now all the gods in heaven hurried to their king, the God Indra, and begged that Indra fight this terrible fire. Indra commanded Parjanya, the God of Rain, to put out the flames. But all his efforts were in vain. The downpours he sent merely turned to vapour in the terrific heat. God Indra became furious and commanded Parjanya to allow torrential cloud bursts to quench the flames.

But Arjuna with the Gandiva bow and the magic arrows, shot hundred of arrows into the air which formed a roof over the forest, so that not even one drop of water could penetrate.

When it was obvious that nothing could now prevent the entire Khandava forest being reduced to ashes, the guardian of the forest, Takshaka, the Serpent Chief, escaped with his life to Kurushebra. Not so fortunate was Aswasen, his son, who tried to escape with his mother. Arjuna, catching sight of them, let fly with an arrow,



The Gods petition God Indra

which killed the mother, and cut off the tail of the son, who badly mutilated, managed to wriggle into safety.

God Indra sent a shaft of brilliant light directed at Arjuna, but even this had no effect. Then the demon inhabitants of the forest banded together to fight against the princes. But the devastating discus in the hands of Sri Krishna, and Arjuna's magic arrows, very soon slaughtered the demons. With the exception of the demon Maya, who begged the princes for his life, which they granted.

The devastating fire had by now spent all its fury, and the God of Fire regained his former health. Then blessing Sri Krishna and Arjuna, the God vanished.

God Indra, who had been forced to admire the powers of Krishna and Arjuna, appeared before them in all his shining glory.

"My sons," he commanded. "Ask any boon of me and it shall be granted."

Arjuna, whose mind forever dwelt on becoming invincible, humbly asked to be given magical weapons.

Maya surrenders to Arjuna



"Most valiant son," Indra said, "One greater than myself, Lord Siva, will descend from Kailas to give you a terrible weapon. But meanwhile let me bestow on you both gift of greater value. As you are bosom friends, from henceforth you will be invulnerable to attacks by mankind or the gods."

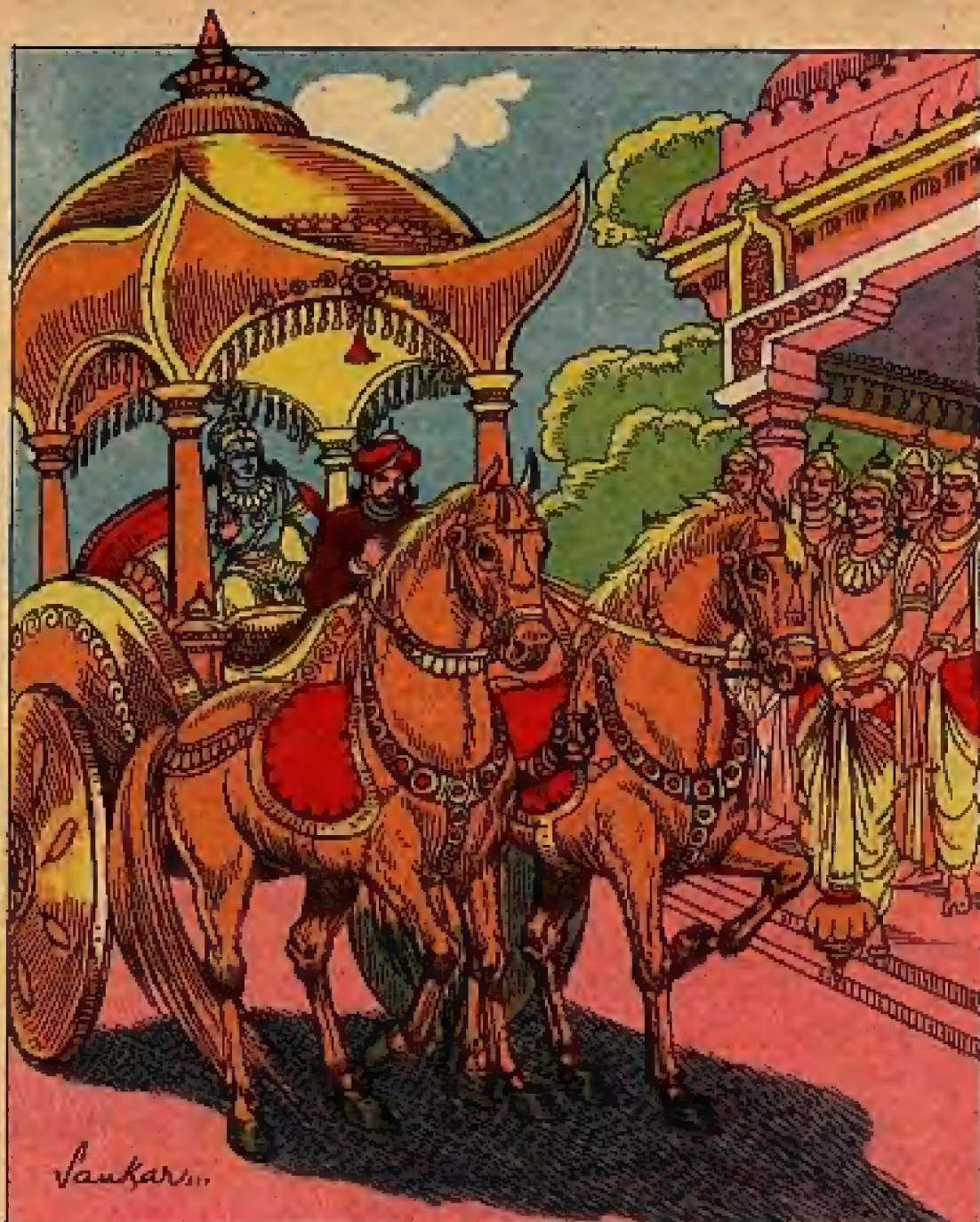
When the God Indra departed, the princes followed by Maya the demon, made their way back to the river Yumana.

Trotting alongside Arjuna, Maya the demon, was full of praises for the princes. "Noble prince," he exclaimed, clutching Arjuna's arm. "I owe my life to you, and beg to give a gift in return. As I am the architect of all demons, I will build for you a wondrous palace, the like of which the world has never seen."

Arjuna shrugged him off. "Listen my friend," he said. "We princes of Kuru never accept gifts for the protection we give to the weak and needy."

But Maya would not accept no for an answer, and in the end Arjuna consulted Krishna on Maya's offer.

Krishna smiled as he listened to the arguments raised by



**Sri Krishna and Arjuna
return to Indraprastha**

Arjuna and Maya. "You should accept Maya's offer," he said to Arjuna. "As you know, your worthy brother Yudhishtira is desirous of building a magnificent palace at Indraprastha. So why not

build it for him?"

In the end Arjuna agreed, and with Draupadi and Subhadra journeyed back to Indraprastha, where they recounted to Yudhishtira all that had

taken place on the river Yamuna, and Maya's offer to build a palace.

On an auspicious day, Maya presented the princes with his plans for the palace. Everyone, including Krishna, was amazed at the breathtaking beauty of the building that Maya had envisaged.

Maya gathered a lot of his building materials from the banks of Lake Bindu, where he had previously planned to build a palace for the demon king, Vrishaparava. At this old site was hidden countless ornamental slabs of sheer white marble, encrusted with precious stones. Also carefully hidden was the mace belonging to the demon king, and the famous conch originally possessed by Varuna, God of the Waters. Maya gave the mace to Bhima, and the conch to Arjuna.

Thousands of workmen toiled day and night to build the palace. And as the months rolled by, the beauty of the palace was slowly unveiled, causing everyone to gasp with astonishment at its grandeur.

When at last, the palace was completed, it became a place of pilgrimage and of wonder.

Inside the palace many of the ornate pillars and decorations were inlaid with precious stones. Whilst in the palace grounds, ornamental lakes had been built, edged with pure crystal and the waters contained golden lotus flowers and golden fish.

When the Pandava princes took up residence in their new palace, a great banquet was held, to which the monarchs throughout the land were invited, as well as the learned sages.



PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST

**Here's the opportunity for you to win a prize
Winning captions will be featured in the June issue**



- These two photographs are somewhat related. Can you think of suitable captions? Could be single words, or a dozen words but the two captions should be related to each other.
- ★ Prize of Rs. 20 will be awarded to the best double caption.
- ★ Entries must be received before

30th April, otherwise they cannot be considered.

- ★ Your entry should be written on a postcard, giving your full name and address, together with your age, and sent to :

Photo Caption Competition,
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Result of Photo Caption Contest in February Issue

The prize is awarded to
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Winning entry — 'The Budding Flutist' — 'The Flowering Damsel'

LEGENDS OF MANY LANDS

The WARRIOR on a FLYING STEED!

One of the fiercest gods of ancient times was Odin, with a shining breastplate and golden helmet. To the 2nd century Germanic people he was the god of night storms who rode through the skies on his magical horse, Sleipnir, whose eight hooves could gallop over land or water or glide through the air.

They imagined him leaping through the lightning-streaked sky, grasping his spear, Gungnir, which had been made by dwarfs. In battle, the warriors sought Odin's help, and the Angles and Saxons called upon him to be on their side before they invaded Britain in the 5th century.

Odin's horse was the swiftest of all stallions. The story is told that one day Odin was riding in the land of the Giants, when one of the inhabitants, named Hrungrir, admired Odin and his horse and claimed, "I myself have a stallion which is even stronger and swifter than yours."

Odin challenged the giant to prove this and the two raced across a vast plain.

However sharply Hrungrir prodded his horse with his spurs, he could not catch up with Odin. Each time he reached the crest of a hill, he saw Odin flying on Sleipnir ahead of him towards the next crest.

Hrungrir was not the only person to have reason to wonder at the magical qualities of Odin's horse. Another man to be amazed by these was one named Hadding, who was being chased by merciless enemies. Odin picked up Hadding and wrapped him up in a large cloak and lay him on the saddle before him. While the horse was galloping home with him, the young man curiously glanced out through a hole in the cloak.

He was shocked by what he saw. They were travelling over the sea and Sleipnir's hooves were pounding the ocean as though he were on a road paved with stones.



Odin's home was a large golden palace called Valhalla where he lived with his favourite heroes who had been killed in battle.

Gleaming gold covered the roof and on benches lay the heroes' breastplates. The palace hall was enormous with 540 doors, each wide enough to admit 800 soldiers abreast. Each evening, Odin watched these heroes feasting and fighting, the flashing of their swords reflecting the huge fires burning in the middle of the hall.

Two crows perched on Odin's shoulders whispering in his ear. Every day, they flew all over the world speaking to the living and the dead and came back before breakfast to give Odin the news of the world.

In Valhalla lived two supernatural women called Valkyries, who were guardians and servants. Apart from waiting on the warriors, they had more war-like duties.

Whenever a battle was being fought, the Valkyries went among the fighters and decided who should die and which side should win.

As they flew tirelessly through space on their fiery steeds, they

looked like warriors in breastplates, helmets and shields and flourishing spears of shining steel.

But they were invisible to all except to the heroes chosen to die and go to Valhalla. To the chosen, they would suddenly appear and tell them of their fate, and then speed through space to warn Odin of the warriors about to become members of his immense band.

His believers gave him different names. The ancestors of the Scandinavians called him Odin, but to the Germans he was Woden or Wotan.

The Angles and Saxons looked upon him as the ancestor of their kings, and the fourth day of the week, Wednesday (Woden's day) bears his name. The manner in which he was invented is very interesting.

This came about in parts of Europe where people believed that, on stormy nights, they could hear the gallop of horses' hooves through the sky. These were ridden by the ghosts of dead warriors, they said, led by a raging fighter. They called this leader Woden from the German word for "rage" which is *wuten*.



An unusual will

In a village near Ujjain lived a wealthy Patel with his four sons. The eldest son helped his father in the management of their vast estates. The next son looked after all the cattle. The third son was responsible for the crops on their lands, whilst the youngest son managed the school and temple which had been donated by the family.

The day came when the wealthy Patel was taken seriously ill, and he knew that he was close to death. So he sent for his four sons, and when they were present, managed to whisper. "My sons, my time has come."

His sons were grieved at such words, and each tried to assure the old man that he would soon be better. The father shook his head. "No my sons, but listen carefully to what I have to say. When I have gone, each of you will stand at one of the legs of my cot, and you will dig underneath the leg you are standing by, and so find my legacy to each of you. But under no circumstances are you to quarrel with each other over your inheritance."

The sons solemnly assured their father that his wishes would be carried out.

The next day the father died, and when the funeral service

was over, the four sons went to the father's room and each stood at one of the legs of the old man's cot.

When they dug beneath the legs of the cot, the eldest soon found a mere handful of chaff. The second son discovered nothing other than a piece of dried dung. The third son, to his dismay, discovered just a bag of earth. But when the youngest son dug beneath his leg of the cot, he found gold and silver.

The three elder brothers were loud in their disappointment. "It is not fair," they shouted. "We have worked hard and have been left nothing."

"But you each chose the leg of the cot to stand by," the youngest pointed out.

The eldest brother, the most disgruntled of all, refused to listen to anyone, and demanded

the matter be thrashed out in court.

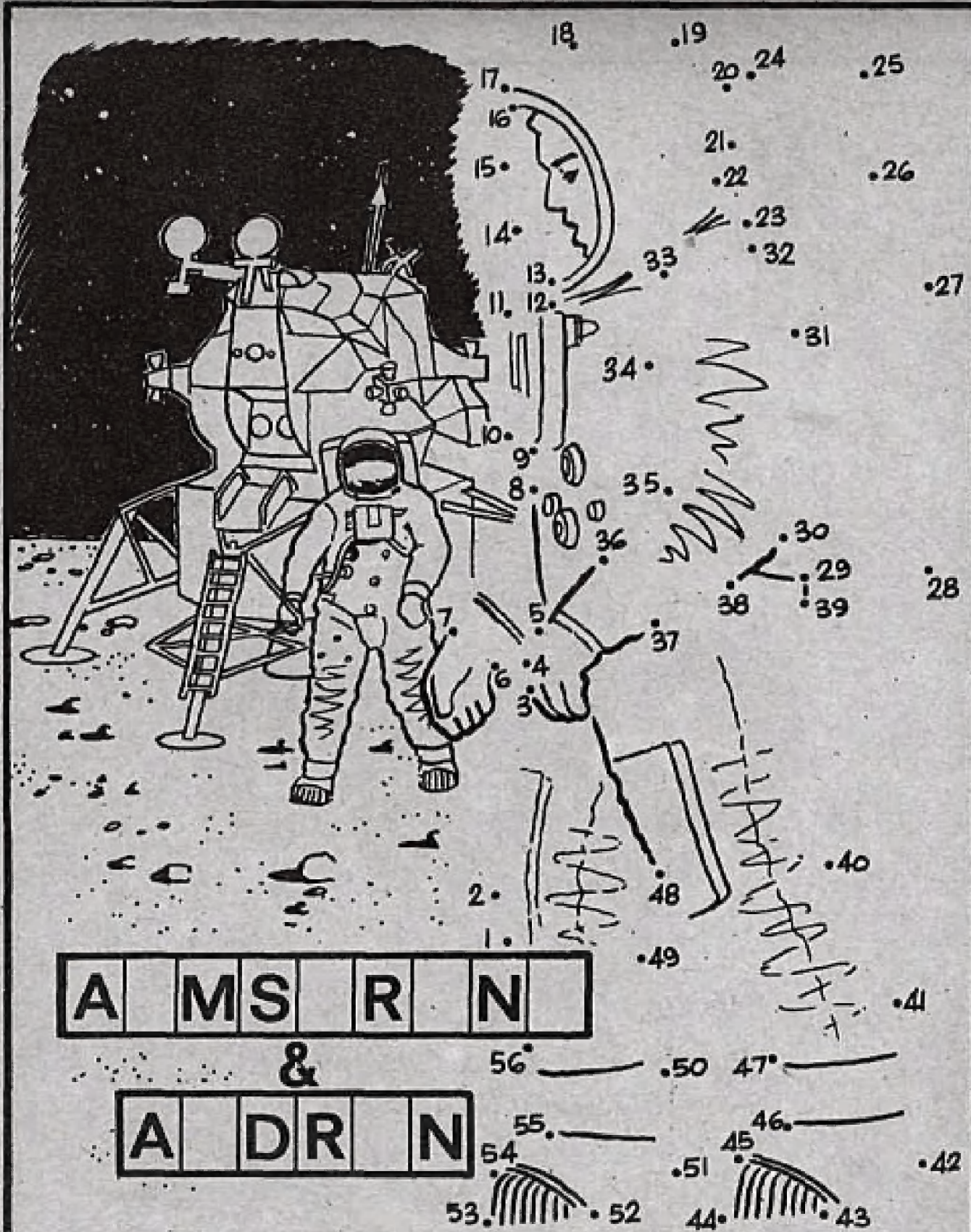
So they duly went to court. The judge listened patiently to what each brother had to say, then asked. "Exactly what does your father's estate comprise?"

"Your Honour," the eldest son replied. "It consists of rice fields, herds of cattle, valuable crop lands and money."

"Then your father did justice to you all," announced the judge. "He obviously left the croplands to the eldest son; the cattle herds to the second son; the rice fields to the third son, and the money to the youngest."

The brothers all felt ashamed that they had doubted their father's intent, and thereafter they lived in unison, happy and content.





Join up the dots Nos 1-56 to complete this picture of the first men to land on the moon. Can you add the missing letters of each astronaut's name? You may need help with this one.



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GREY FOX

A resident of America, the Grey Fox can easily climb trees to chase squirrels or to make a feast of the fruit and berries. Even eats the eggs and young of nesting birds.

